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Congress of the United States
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February 23, 2010

The Honorable Robert M. Gates
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Gates:

I write to share my concerns regarding the recent decision to halt Military Spouse Career Advancement Accounts (MyCAA). As you are aware, the Department of Defense announced on February 16, 2010 that effective immediately the MyCAA program would temporarily halt operations. The Department cited that it is reviewing the software applications, financial assistance documents and the overall program. No end date has been given for this review.

The MyCAA program has been very successful in providing military spouses with opportunities to pursue portable careers in high-demand, high-growth occupations. Nearly 133,000 military spouses have applied for financial assistance under the MyCAA program, and I appreciate the decision to continue providing assistance to the approximately 98,000 spouses whose applications were already approved.

However, there are still thousands of spouses who were awaiting approval and assistance from MyCAA, and who were counting on this program to cover expenses for their licenses, certificates, credentials or degree programs. Those who cannot find alternative sources of funding on such short notice may be forced to cancel or postpone their educational plans. This is simply unacceptable.

When our men and women go overseas to fight for our country, they depend upon us to look out for their families. Our troops must have absolute confidence that the benefits and support we offer our military families will be there no matter what, and if we have made a commitment to help military spouses improve their education, then we must keep that promise.

If there were sufficient problems or concerns about the integrity of the program to warrant its immediate and unannounced suspension, then those concerns should be made public without delay, so that the seriousness of our commitment to military families is not called into question.

I request that the Department take the necessary steps to provide assistance for these 35,000 spouses who were awaiting approval. In addition, I request a thorough explanation for why the program was halted, and how the Department plans to continue this important program.

I commend your immediate attention to this issue and look forward to working with you to ensure our military spouses can continue to receive the assistance they need to advance their careers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Glenn Nye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" and the last name "Nye" clearly distinguishable.

Glenn Nye
Member of Congress